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DEPARTMENT OF NURSING EDUCATION

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PRELIMINARY REPORT ON UNIVERSITY SCHOOLS OF NURSING

PREPARED BY THE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION OF THE NATIONAL LEAGUE
OF NURSING EDUCATION

I. INTRODUCTION

Since 1909, when Doctor Beard outlined the main arguments for the "University Education of the Nurse," there has been marked progress in the development of nursing schools under the auspices of colleges and universities. Though they may still be said to be in the experimental stage, there is no doubt that university schools of nursing have come to stay and that we shall see within the next few years a much wider extension of this movement throughout the whole country.

The Committee on Education of the National League of Nursing Education has received many inquiries from universities and nursing schools, asking for advice as to the best methods of organization, courses of study, financial arrangements, etc. The Committee feels that the work has not been long enough established to warrant any very positive or authoritative statement on all of these points, but there are some conclusions which seem fairly clear as a result of the combined experience of a number of university nursing schools working under different forms of organization in different parts of the country. It has been decided, therefore, to issue a preliminary report telling what has been done so far, outlining some of the aims which these schools are trying to realize, and pointing out a few principles which seem to be essential in building up a sound structure of nursing education within a university or college.

While the Committee is anxious to encourage in every possible way every experiment which promises a sounder and broader system of nursing education, it believes that nothing could be more unfortunate for the future of nursing, than the too prevalent idea that almost any kind of connection between a nursing school and university is acceptable or advisable. A connection which establishes no requirements and imposes no standards on either side, cannot fail to discredit the institutions involved, and worse still, it injures the whole movement which it claims to represent. If a university school of nursing is to stand for anything, it should certainly stand for the

best standards yet worked out, both in instruction and practical experience.

It is hoped, therefore, that this preliminary discussion of the whole problem may lead to the gradual establishment of standards by which every proposed adventure into the field of university education may be judged and by which such school may be guided in working out this relationship.

II. STAGES IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF UNIVERSITY EDUCATION FOR NURSES—TYPES OF COURSES ALREADY ORGANIZED

1. The first stage was the establishment of university hospitals for the clinical instruction of medical students. The nursing schools of such hospitals, though not directly connected with the university, very often enjoyed many of the advantages and privileges of a university connection. This was especially true in great medical centers where clinical facilities were abundant, where the spirit of medical research penetrated into every phase of hospital life, and where the teaching staff of the nursing school was drawn almost entirely from the university medical staff. Unfortunately, however, the educational standards in some of these so-called university schools have been almost entirely untouched by university influence and have indeed been far below the standards of many schools which had no such connection.

2. The first university to receive nurses as regular students and to give them the recognition of a college degree, was Columbia University. Since 1899, when two nurses entered Teachers College for an advanced course in "Hospital Economy," there have been over 1,000 nurses regularly enrolled as students in that university, many of whom have received the B.S. and A.M. degrees, and special professional diplomas in Training School Administration, Teaching and Public Health Nursing.

Since 1910, when the first university course in Public Health Nursing was started in Teachers College, a number of colleges have united with visiting nurse associations in offering special training for public health nursing. Simmons College and Western Reserve University both started such courses in 1916, and there have been several others since that date. All these courses have been for graduate nurses or for student nurses in the senior year.

3. In the early years of 1900 some of the higher technical schools, among them Pratt Institute, Drexel Institute, and Simmons College, introduced short preparatory courses of from 4 to 8 months for students expecting to enter nursing schools. These courses did not prove very successful, except where they were definitely linked up with the

curriculum of some good nursing school and were required of all students. Most of them have been discontinued, but some have developed into the five-year, combined, liberal arts and professional course described later.

In a few cases, an arrangement has been made between a college or university and one or more nursing schools to teach certain of the regular preparatory subjects such as Anatomy and Physiology, Chemistry, Bacteriology, etc. Such schools cannot be considered in any sense as university schools, though they may enjoy some of the benefits of university teaching.

4. The University of Minnesota was the first (1909) to establish a school of nursing as an integral part of the university system. From the beginning, nursing students were admitted on the same educational basis as other college students, their nursing course was under university auspices from beginning to end (3 years) and on graduation they received a special professional degree from the university. A number of other universities have taken over the complete professional training of student nurses, among them Indiana, Cincinnati, Michigan, Colorado, Nebraska, Missouri, and Northwestern.

5. The latest development in university education for nurses is the five year, combined, liberal arts and professional program, leading to the college degree, and the professional diploma. Since 1916, a number of universities, among them Cincinnati, Columbia, Leland Stanford, California, Colorado, Baylor, Texas, Nebraska, Northwestern, Indiana, Minnesota, Michigan, Ohio, Washington, British Columbia in Canada, and a few colleges,—Simmons, Mills and the Milwaukee Downer, have agreed to credit the professional training in nursing as a part of the requirement toward the A. B. or B. S. degree and to organize a major which leads directly toward the professional field of nursing but which at the same time includes most of the academic subjects usually required in a regular college course. The object of this combined program is to give the young high school graduate an opportunity to continue her general education in college for at least two years, before taking up her hospital training, and to have the whole course knit together and carried on under the auspices of the university from beginning to end. The idea is to ensure not only a broader cultural background for the nurse, but a sounder scientific foundation for her professional work.

It is not assumed that all students entering the work in a university school of nursing would be able to take this longer course leading to the degree, but it would be open to all who qualify, and if the academic subjects cannot be taken in the beginning most of the

universities allow the student to make these up later, and thus complete the requirement for the degree.

6. Up to the present time, therefore, regular instruction in universities and colleges has been provided for four different groups of students interested in nursing.

- (a) *Graduate Nurses*, wishing to prepare for advanced work along such lines as Administration in Nursing Schools, Teaching in Nursing Schools, or Public Health Nursing.
- (b) *Pre-Nursing Students* expecting to enter Nursing Schools and wishing to get a better scientific foundation for later work.
- (c) *Student Nurses during Professional Course*. The instruction here sometimes covers the entire three-year course or may only cover a few subjects in the preparatory or final years.
- (d) *College Students Working toward a College Degree* and wishing to include in their major, the regular professional course in nursing.

Some universities provide for all of these groups, some for one or two only. Since it would be impossible in this limited report to discuss all the varied types of university courses in nursing, it has been decided to center attention on the *five-year combined course* and the *regular professional course in nursing* under university schools.

III. WHAT ARE THE MAIN ARGUMENTS IN FAVOR OF ESTABLISHING SCHOOLS OF NURSING IN UNIVERSITIES?

1. There is no question that universities provide superior educational opportunities which are eagerly sought by all types of professional schools. Medicine, law, dentistry, pharmacy, engineering, commerce, agriculture, social work, journalism,—these and many other modern vocations have found a place within our universities and are receiving support from university funds. Nursing has an equal claim to the benefits of university education and very much needs the support and help which universities can give.

2. The modern nurse is in a very special sense a public servant. She is employed in our schools, our boards of health, our public hospitals, our Army and Navy and our Public Health Service. Society lays upon her heavy responsibilities, not only for the care of the sick, but for the protection of community health and the conservation of our human resources. If the nurse is poorly prepared, or if the conditions of work or training are such as to discourage capable women from entering this profession, the public suffers. It is, therefore, to the public's interest to see that the education of the nurse is carried

on under the best possible conditions and established on the soundest possible basis.

3. There are over 1,600 nursing schools in this country connected with hospitals. Their educational work has been seriously hampered by the fact that they have no independent financial resources and are unable to provide the kind of instruction which is demanded by the newer needs of the nursing field. This makes it increasingly difficult for them to attract the better educated women who are wanted everywhere in nursing to-day. The only way to bring these women into nursing and to prepare them as they need to be prepared, is to build a sounder and more comprehensive system of education on the basis of our present system, which is in many respects exceedingly good.

4. By connecting the hospital with the university, and using the resources of both, it has been proven that a very practical and flexible system of nursing education can be worked out, preserving the best elements in the older system, correcting many of its weaknesses, and providing for expansion and growth in accordance with current needs. The hospital gains, rather than loses by such a relationship, because it still retains the services of the student nurses but is relieved of the main responsibility for their education which is now assumed, under certain definite specified conditions, by the university.

The fact that practically all genuine university nursing schools are able to attract and keep large groups of well prepared students, while most other schools are suffering from a shortage of applicants, shows that they are able to offer those young women something which appeals strongly to them and satisfies them.

5. The subjects of study which nurses require for their preparation, are most of them found in any well established university, or can readily be supplied. The contents of a good course in nursing compares very favorably with the content of similar professional courses in other fields. Nursing requires a broad social and scientific groundwork and the close application of these sciences to the nursing care and treatment of sick patients and to the building up of good standards of home and community health.

While there is no question of the gain to nursing schools from a closer connection with the university, such schools or departments have made their own distinct contribution to the university, also, enriching its curriculum, broadening its interests, and bringing it into closer contact with social conditions in the world outside.

6. It is not the purely scientific and professional subjects only, which are of interest to the nursing student. At present many ambitious young women have had to choose between nursing and a college

education; they could not take both. There seems to be no reason why the rich stores of human knowledge should not be freely open to the girl who chooses nursing as her profession. The prospective nurse as well as the prospective physician, needs all the cultural background she can get, and it is one of the great advantages of the university connection that the student who wishes to spend a longer time may broaden her course to include literature history and language, and other so-called liberal subjects which are essential to an all-round college education. The university also offers the nurse the opportunity of going as far as she is capable of going, and winning any degrees which are open to other students. Nurses have shown themselves as keen in scholarship and as capable of meeting university standards as are other groups of students, and a considerable number have already won, not only the Bachelor's, but the Master's degree.

IV. WHAT STANDARDS MUST BE MET IN ORDER TO ADMIT ANY PROFESSIONAL SCHOOL OR DEPARTMENT TO UNIVERSITY STATUS?

1. It has already been pointed out that no school can really be called a university school until it conforms with university standards and becomes an integral part of the university system. In seeking a university connection, the professional school must be prepared to accept certain definite obligations and to live up to certain conditions. These will vary somewhat with different universities, but the following would usually be considered fundamental in all.

2. The professional school must be accepted by the university on an equal basis with other professional schools. Its director or dean must be represented on the university council or senate and all the members of its teaching staff must qualify as members of the university faculty with titles of professor, instructor, assistant, etc., according to their relative rank.

3. The professional school may have its own independent endowment or it may receive its funds from the university, but it must have a sufficient, assured income to guarantee its ability to maintain university standards of instruction and administration.

4. Students of the professional school must qualify for admission on the same basis as other students. Matriculation to practically all universities means the completion of four full years of high school work in a school of recognized standing. Some colleges and universities require an entrance examination in certain fundamental subjects. Others accept certified records from an accredited high school or from the College Entrance Board. Students who fail to meet all these requirements may sometimes be admitted with slight

deficiencies to be made up after entrance, but they cannot matriculate until these requirements are met.

5. The standards of instruction in the professional school must measure up to the standards usually accepted in college work. This would mean among other things:

- (a) Thoroughly prepared instructors who have themselves reached a fairly high grade of scholarship and professional training. (Most college instructors are required to have at least the A.B. or B.S. degree.)
- (b) Well equipped classrooms and laboratories. It is understood in all colleges that scientific courses in Biology, Chemistry, Bacteriology, etc., must be accompanied by individual laboratory work conducted in accordance with modern scientific methods.
- (c) Classes and lectures must be held regularly for the full period scheduled, and the work both in class and outside, must be systematically organized and conducted in such a way as to require a fairly high degree of individual effort and initiative on the part of the students.
- (d) All courses for which college credit is given should be continued for a period long enough to ensure a good command, and not simply a "smattering" of the subject. As a rule no course less than thirty hours would be considered worthy of college credit.

6. Students should be required to attend classes promptly and regularly and to complete all prescribed work before receiving credit for the course. Students who miss more than a certain proportion of their class work or whose general grade of work is poor would be required to repeat their courses until satisfactorily completed or to discontinue their work.

7. The student in a college is expected to do more independent work, to master more difficult subject-matter, and to proceed more rapidly than the students in schools of ordinary standing. As a rule, an hour in class or lecture presupposes an hour and one-half to two hours of outside study or preparation, and every program of work should provide for this study time, as well as for class time. University schools are also expected to provide ample library facilities for their students.

8. A full set of records must be kept for each student and these must be available for future reference. These records usually include:

- (a) Certified records of previous education.

- (b) Registration records with general details as to age, personal history, etc.
- (c) A list of courses taken in the university with a record of grades and credits received. (Additional records of health and character are usually required by nursing schools.)

9. Graduation from the university or the awarding of certificates or diplomas, are conditional upon the satisfactory completion of the full required course of study. Students in all departments usually graduate together at the annual commencement and receive their degrees and diplomas from the president of the university.

10. Many universities admit a certain number of students who are not eligible for degrees or diplomas but who may be allowed to follow a special program of work for which they demonstrate their fitness. The proportion of such students should be strictly limited in order to maintain the general standing and scholarship of the group.

11. Students of all departments of a university should be eligible to all its privileges and should share to as full an extent as possible in its life and interests. This would usually include:

- (a) Admission to special entertainments, public lectures, festivals, etc.
- (b) Use of libraries, social rooms, etc.
- (c) Membership in clubs, religious organizations, student council, etc., and representation on the college paper.

V. SUGGESTIONS FOR THE ORGANIZATION OF A NURSING SCHOOL OR DEPARTMENT ON A UNIVERSITY BASIS

Essential Elements in the Structure:

1. The general standing and resources of the university or college should be studied carefully, to determine:

- (a) Whether it is a progressive and a sound educational institution;
- (b) Whether it offers the kinds of subjects needed for any considerable part of the nursing course;
- (c) Whether it has classroom and other facilities to accommodate a new group of students;
- (d) Whether it can secure financial resources to put this new branch of work on a good basis.

2. The available hospital facilities should also be studied. No matter how good the university, it would be unwise to offer a university course in nursing unless the hospital facilities were of the highest type. A good hospital field for laboratory work in nursing would include:

- (a) A wide variety of clinical material, representing the acute rather than the chronic diseases;
- (b) Active services in medical, surgical, obstetrical and pediatric work with mental and contagious service available, if possible. (Some of these may be secured through affiliation.)
- (c) Good methods of organization and administration, public spirited personnel, high standards of medical and nursing service, and good morale. A commercial hospital or one with a large proportion of private cases would not be considered a suitable laboratory.
- (d) The conditions of life and work for student nurses such as would maintain good standards of health, to assure the happiness of the student body, and make every day of hospital work educationally profitable. This would usually mean, among other things, attractive and comfortable living quarters, hours not more than fifty-two weekly, the employment of paid helpers for most of the routine housekeeping work, provision for wholesome recreation and social life and probably for some form of student government.

3. In order to provide some experience in public health nursing, it would be necessary to arrange for some field where this could be carried on under the same good conditions. As a rule this would mean affiliation with a well-organized visiting nursing association, having a group of trained supervisors and a fairly wide variety of activities, including, at least, maternity, child welfare, and prenatal work.

4. Having all these essentials provided, the next thing would be to decide on the basis of organization. There are several forms in operation:

- (a) Type 1,—Where the hospital is owned by the university for the use of the medical school, the nursing school may be a part of the medical school as in the University Hospital, Minneapolis; Robert W. Long Hospital, Indianapolis; Lane Hospital, San Francisco; and others.
- (b) Type 2,—Where the hospital and university are both owned and financed by the city, but under different departments. This is the case in Cincinnati. The School of Nursing and Health in the Medical College is a part of the University which has control of and is responsible for the medical work, teaching, and nursing in the City Hospital by provision of the city charter.

- (c) Type 3,—Where the university has no hospital of its own, but secures the necessary practical experience for its students through affiliations with one or more hospitals of established standards in the same city or in some cases, (as in the British Columbia University, Canada) with selected hospitals of good standing in the state or province. Usually, under Type 3, the university undertakes no responsibility for conducting the nursing school of the hospital,—it only secures the opportunity of sending its five-year students to these hospitals for a part of their training, under certain stipulated conditions. The university may accept the general scheme of training as arranged by the hospital school of nursing and give credit for this in terms of university points, or it may arrange with different institutions to give certain parts of the course which the university outlines and follows throughout. In this case the university and not the hospital school would award the professional diploma in nursing.
- (d) The first is the simplest and best arrangement, unless the university hospital is too small or is inadequately equipped, or for some other reason is unable to give the best kind of nursing experience. In types 1 and 2, the university has better control over standards and the students have the great advantage of being under the same administration from the beginning to the end of their course. Where the hospital and the university are under different boards, there is always some difficulty in agreeing absolutely on standards and policies, and in following the student closely throughout the whole course.

(To be continued)

A QUESTIONABLE AMENDMENT

An amendment to the Shepperd-Towner maternity bill has been introduced in the United States Senate which would provide for federal grants to certain county hospitals, maintained and equipped for the care of maternity cases and children, and which would require such hospitals to provide courses in elementary nursing not to exceed one year in duration, the candidates to be secured by competitive examination from pupils of schools of the county.